

On the plateau immediately beneath this one – the excavation at this point has been given the name ‘**Excavation of the Ashlar Masonry**’ – survives the ground-plan of another public building of the Late Archaic/Classical period, which was found beneath the remains of buildings from later periods. It consists of a series of rectangular rooms at different levels, following the slope of the land, and a stoa. In front of the wall of this stoa, which is 1.70 m. thick and 20 m. long, the bases of five pillars were discovered. Two different types of masonry – large stone blocks and polygonal stones – distinguish two different building phases. The large number of red-figure sherds, many of which date from the first half of the 5th century BC, permits the building to be dated to this early period and indicates that organised cities with splendid architecture existed in Upper Macedonia even before the unification of the Macedonian kingdom under Philip II.

In addition to the numerous fragments of both imported pots and locally produced black-figure ware, other interesting finds were discovered, such as a small Attic skyphos with the name ΘΕΜΙΔΟΣ engraved on its base, and part of a tile with the following four-line inscription engraved upon it: **ΑΡΚΑΠΟΣ ΕΡΙΑ ΗΗΗΔΔΔΔΔ ΔΔΠΙΙΙ**. Evidently, this inscription was engraved by an ordinary citizen in the middle of the 5th century BC and represents a bill, written in the Attic acrophonic system, concerning a certain Arkapos and a quantity of wool (eria) weighing 350 units and costing 28 units. On the same site, there are also traces of well-constructed walls in the later building phases, and at some points the Classical walls have been used as foundations. One room of the Classical building contained a series of ovens. On one side of the room lies a pithos and on the other a burnt tile, with part of an early polygonal wall above them.

Apart from these large buildings on the Megali Rachi hill, areas containing private dwellings have also been excavated. Naturally, the amount of space available for building on a hill is always limited. Thus, in the areas that have been investigated, evidence of successive settlement phases has been uncovered: some walls have been reused, while other, new ones have been built on top of the remains of earlier dwellings. The houses were separated by partition walls or narrow lanes, into which ran drainage conduits. They were built of rubble masonry and possessed earthen floors or floors made of mud and small stones. There was some interior decoration of painted plaster, while fragments of painted tiles also attest to the existence of carefully executed facades. A wide variety of tiles was used in the roofs of the houses. Numerous fragments have been found bearing the stamps of the workshops that produced them, the most common stamp being that of the figure of a sphinx.

Owing to the sloping terrain, some of the rooms in these houses were built on different levels.

Stone staircases led to the upper rooms, the back walls of which were set into the sloping ground. The houses possessed small courtyards, rooms with hearths, storerooms with pithoi, and rooms/workshops with stone handmills in the corners. Pottery kilns and traces of metalworking (iron, bronze and lead) are very common.

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